

FACT SHEET FOR CARERS / OOHc PROVIDERS

January 2022

COVID-19 vaccine rollout for children and young people (aged 5 and above) in care

The Department of Communities Tasmania is committed to ensuring the health and wellbeing of all children in care.

Immunisation protects children against harmful infections and is the safest and most effective way of preventing a range of diseases.

As of 10 January 2022, the Tasmanian Government expanded eligibility criteria for the COVID-19 vaccine to all people aged 5 and above.

All children under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Secretary should be fully immunised and parents who retain guardianship of their child are strongly encouraged to consent to all immunisations.

The Secretary of the Department of Communities Tasmania has provided a generic consent for children and young people, aged 5 to 17 years, who are under the guardianship, or in the custody, of the Secretary, to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. This means when a child/young person (aged 5 and above) who is under a Care and Protection Order wants to receive the

vaccination, they can do so either with the support of their carer, worker or doctor.

Young people can sometimes provide their own consent to receiving the COVID-19 vaccination. The ability of a person under 18 to consent for medical treatment for themselves is sometimes referred to as “Gillick competence” or being a “mature minor”. To assess competency, the immuniser must be satisfied that the young person has sufficient understanding and intelligence to:

- Fully understand the proposed treatment;
- Discuss the vaccination (including intended and possible side effects and consequences if vaccination is not undertaken); and
- Provide their written consent prior to administering the vaccine.

The Secretary giving generic consent for young people (aged 5 and above) to receive the COVID-19 vaccine means that young people with a disability who are under the guardianship, or in custody, of the Secretary, are able to receive a vaccination.



Do I have to get a vaccine?

The COVID-19 vaccine will be voluntary, available to everyone and free.

Tasmanians have a great record in supporting immunisation programs. The aim is to make COVID-19 vaccine accessible to all eligible Tasmanians.

Side effects of the COVID-19 vaccine

Some people may experience minor side effects, similar to those experienced following a flu vaccine. Common side effects include pain, redness and swelling at the injection site as well as more general side-effects such as fever, chills, headache and tiredness.

Most symptoms are mild to moderate, occur within the first three days after vaccination, and disappear within 1–2 days of when they start.

Rare side effects from the Pfizer vaccine include:

- Severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis), which usually occur within the first 15 minutes following vaccination and is why patients are asked to remain at the vaccination clinic for observation for at least 15 minutes following vaccination.
- Myocarditis and pericarditis (heart inflammation). Most reported cases have been mild and people have recovered quickly often without treatment.
- If side effects persist or worry you, then please seek medical attention.

How can a young person access the COVID-19 vaccination?

A young person (aged 5 and above) can currently receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

It is important to remember that a person must receive both doses of the vaccination (and booster when permitted) to provide the best immunity.

When receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, you will be able to make that equally important follow up appointment for the second dose.

A carer will be able to sign the consent form on behalf of the young person at their appointment.

To book for a COVID-19 vaccine, please visit the following link for more information:

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/vaccination-information/covid-19-vaccination>

Contact with the Child Safety Service

It is important that you make contact with your relevant Child Safety Officer to inform them you are/have made an appointment for the young person in your care to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. This allows Child Safety Service staff to track the number of young people under the Guardianship, or in custody, of the Secretary, who have received the COVID-19 vaccination.

Additionally, all Australians can access their immunisation history statement through Medicare for proof of vaccination, both digitally and in hard copy, if required.

For latest advice, information and resources

Coronavirus Information:

Visit <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/>

Call the National Coronavirus Health Information Line on 1800 020 080. It operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you require translating or interpreting services, call 131 450.

If you have concerns about your health, speak to your doctor.